

France TELECOM strengthens position by developing IP skills delivered by Global Knowledge

The project brief

When France TELECOM needed to develop the key skills required to support its transformation into Europe's leading enterprise provider of IP-based communications services it turned to Global Knowledge

France TELECOM is the leading telecommunications provider in France. The company has 190,000 employees – half of them engineers – and operates in a rapidly changing and fiercely competitive, technology-driven market.

Launched in June 2005, the company's its NexT program aims to develop a fully integrated and comprehensive portfolio of solutions that will ensure France TELECOM maintains its leadership position in the telecoms sector. This strategic initiative will see the group develop and offer a whole new range of innovative products and services for both business and consumer customers.

The NeXT initiative will ensure that France TELCOM can meet all the needs of individual businesses and professionals, public sector organisations and individual consumers – whether they are at work or at home, at a fixed location or on the move.

In order to do this successfully, France TELCOM needs to ensure that all its technicians and customer-facing staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to implement and deliver full-integrated IP-based telephony and data communications solutions and services. Training therefore, is a vital element of the NexT program.

Enabling business transformation - developing the key skills required to meet changing customer needs

At the end of 2005, France TELCOM asked Global

Knowledge to develop a knowledge development program for its nationwide team of engineers, who had previously worked with traditional telephony and cabling solutions. In the first instance, technicians needed to acquire fundamental knowledge of key areas of networking, including:

- TCP/IP
- Voice over IP
- Security
- Wireless networking
- Operating systems

Then, depending on their job requirements and the specific skills that individuals had acquired, they were to be placed on a specific program with the aim of achieving of high level professional certifications for key vendors such as Cisco Systems or Nortel Networks.

Meeting the challenge – achieving high levels of knowledge within a restricted time-scale

The France TELCOM skills development program presented a major challenge for Global Knowledge for a number of reasons. The group has over 1,200 technicians that it wants to put through the training. The program was to be run in phases between the start of 2006 and the end of 2008, with each cohort of technicians completing their courses within a five month period.

Before the training commenced, delegates possessed only a very basic level of knowledge in networking, yet needed to attain high levels of skills and understanding of specific areas within a demanding schedule. France TELECOM wanted them to be ready to sell and support specific IP-based solutions as soon as they had completed their training.

To meet these stringent requirements, Global Knowledge developed special courses and content for France TELECOM and set out a detailed project management structure to ensure all engineers could meet the required

standards of knowledge on schedule. A specific learning plan was devised for each individual technician that included classroom and computer-based learning, practical workshops and hands-on experience, as well as final certification exams.

To guarantee the quality and consistency of the whole program, Global Knowledge worked with France TELECOM to make a detailed pre- and post-training assessment of the knowledge levels of each technician. This involved the development of several multiple-choice questionnaires and tests for each training module. These were used to stream delegates into the most appropriate part of the program, so that they did not receive any unnecessary training and to ensure that required skill-levels were achieved.

technical staff were due to commence their assessment and training with a view to completion by the end of the year.

As a result France TELECOM has been able to start offering services in key growth areas such as IP telephony, wireless networking and convergence. With more of its technicians now going through the program, the company is building its capability and its business in all these areas.

The two companies have worked in partnership to achieve the objectives of the project and ensure that France TELECOM is able to meet the rapidly-changing needs and expectations of all its customers and remain competitive in a fast-moving global market.

Key skills – what Global Knowledge delivered

- **Customized course content** – special courses in Networking, PABX/VoIP, WiFi, Security and Windows / Linux, were all developed and delivered by Global Knowledge.
- **Flexible project management and delivery** – instructor-led training and elearning were used as much as possible to save on traveling costs – a number of France TELECOM engineers located in Guadeloupe received almost exactly the same training as those based in France.
- **Fully-structured learning plan** – training days alternated between formal learning and hands-on operational experience at the customer site.
- **Exclusive Enterprise Technician Voice/Data over IP certification** – this was specially-devised by Global Knowledge to provide a high level of quality control – delegates were required to provide a customer or service case study and subjected to an oral examination by an expert panel to qualify.



One of the trainees group, with representatives from France Telecom and Global Knowledge

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Getting results – how France TELECOM is benefiting from the Global Knowledge training program

The training program that Global Knowledge has delivered for France TELECOM is a key driving force behind the company's NeXT transformation project.

By early 2008, more than 700 of France TELECOM's enterprise technicians had commenced their individual learning programs and close to 500 had already successfully completed the courses. The remaining 500